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PTQ0916

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

PAGE 01 CARACA 00984 01 OF 02 120313Z
ACTION CA-01

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00
	COME-00	CTME-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	WHA-00
	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00
	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01
	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OES-01
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00

/016W

-----85106B 120315Z /38

O 120251Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5453
INFO OPEC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000984

NSC FOR AMB MAISTO
USCINCSO FOR POLAD

DEPT CA FOR MARY A. RYAN AND FS/OP/WHA AND S/ES-
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 00984 01 OF 02 120313Z
ODS/OP/CC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/12

TAGS: ECON, PGOV, PREL, EPET, ASEC, CASC VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA'S GENERAL STRIKE AS OF 11:00 PM
APRIL 11

REF: A. CARACAS 00981 B. CARACAS 980 C. CARACAS
00974 D. 00973 E. 00966, F. 00948

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CHARLES S. SHAPIRO. REASON
1.5 (B) AND (D).

THE NATIONAL GUARD SPEAKS OUT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
DATE/CASE ID: 12 APR 2005 200400109

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1. (U) AT APPROXIMATELY 7:30PM, GENERAL CARLOS ALFONSO MARTINEZ, INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL GUARD (GN), TOOK TO THE AIRWAVES. GENERAL MARTINEZ, SECOND-IN-COMMAND AT THE GN, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS ASSERTING CONTROL OVER THE GN, EFFECTIVELY DEPOSING GENERAL BELLISARIO, THE ERSTWHILE HEAD OF THE GN. HIS MOTIVATION FOR THIS ACTION WAS TO PRESERVE THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE GN IN THE CURRENT CRISIS, THUS ENABLING IT TO PURSUE ITS MISSION OF MAINTAINING ORDER. TO THAT END, GENERAL MARTINEZ ASKED THAT THE PRESIDENT STEP DOWN PEACEFULLY.

2. (U) EDGAR BOLIVAR RAMIREZ, COMMANDANTE OF OPERATIONS OF THE GN (THIRD IN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND)
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PAGE 03 CARACA 00984 01 OF 02 120313Z
SPOKE IN A PRESS CONFERENCE AGAINST LIBERTADOR MAYOR FREDDIE BERNAL, CONDEMNING HIS USE OF GN FORCES FOR HIS OWN PURPOSES AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA. HE ASSERTED SOLIDARITY WITH THE GENERAL OFFICERS' OPPOSITION GROUP AND CLAIMS THAT THE MAJORITY OF GN PERSONNEL SHARE HIS VIEW.

3. (U) AT APPROXIMATELY 8:00PM, A COLONEL OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, ACCOMPANIED BY NINE COLLEAGUES ARRIVED AT THE EMBASSY GATES. THE COLONEL HAD BEEN SHOT AT MIRAFLORES PALACE. HE CLAIMS THAT HE WAS SHOT BY DISIP AGENTS. HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES CAME TO THE EMBASSY TO SEEK REFUGE. DCM IS SEEKING GUIDANCE FROM DEPARTMENT ON THIS ISSUE. MEANWHILE, THE GN GROUP IS WAITING IN EMBASSY PARKING LOT UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MUNICIPAL POLICE.

THE POSITION OF THE ARMY

4. (U) COMANDANTE GENERAL OF THE ARMY, EFRAIN VASQUEZ VELASCO SPOKE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT APPROXIMATELY 9:00PM. HE APOLOGIZED TO THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE FOR THE VIOLENCE THAT OCCURRED TODAY, AND ADDRESSED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES. HE ASKED ALL MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM TO REMAIN LOYAL TO THEIR RESPECTIVE UNITS. HE STRESSED THAT THE MILITARY ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE TONIGHT WAS NEITHER A COUP NOR TREASON, BUT MERELY A REFLECTION OF THE WILL OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE. HE CITED ARTICLES 328 AND 350 OF THE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION AS JUSTIFICATION FOR MILITARY

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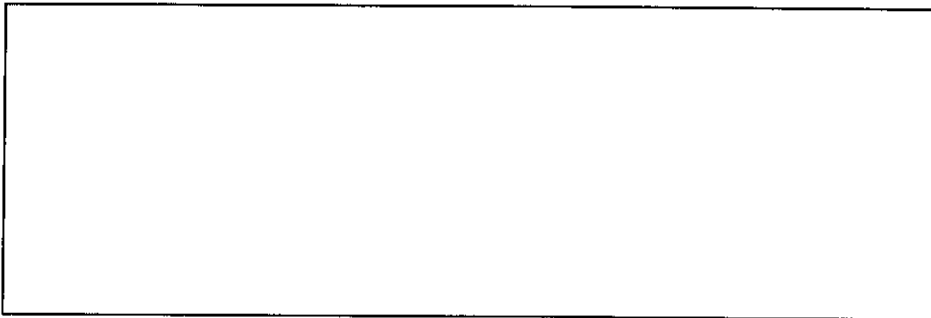
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PAGE 04 CARACA 00984 01 OF 02 120313Z
ACTION.

PLANES FLYING FROM LA CARLOTA

5. (U) IN THE LAST THREE HOURS, FOUR PLANES HAVE
TAKEN OFF FROM LA CARLOTA AIRFIELD UNDER COVER OF
DARKNESS. IT IS UNCLEAR WHO WAS ON THE PLANES,
HOWEVER GUAICAIPURO LAMEDA, FORMER PDVSA PRESIDENT
REPORTED THAT THE FIRST LADY, MARISABEL DE CHAVEZ,
AND PERHAPS THE FIRST FAMILY, WAS ABOARD A PDVSA
PLANE THAT DEPARTED THIS EVENING. ONE REPORT STATED
THAT THE FIRST LADY WAS BEING FLOWN TO BARQUISIMETO,
WHERE HER MOTHER LIVES. IT IS ALSO RUMORED THAT
FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER JOSE VICENTE RANGEL WAS
ABOARD ONE OF THE PLANES.

ANOTHER REQUEST FOR ASYLUM



B1

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PAGE 01 CARACA 00984 02 OF 02 120313Z
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